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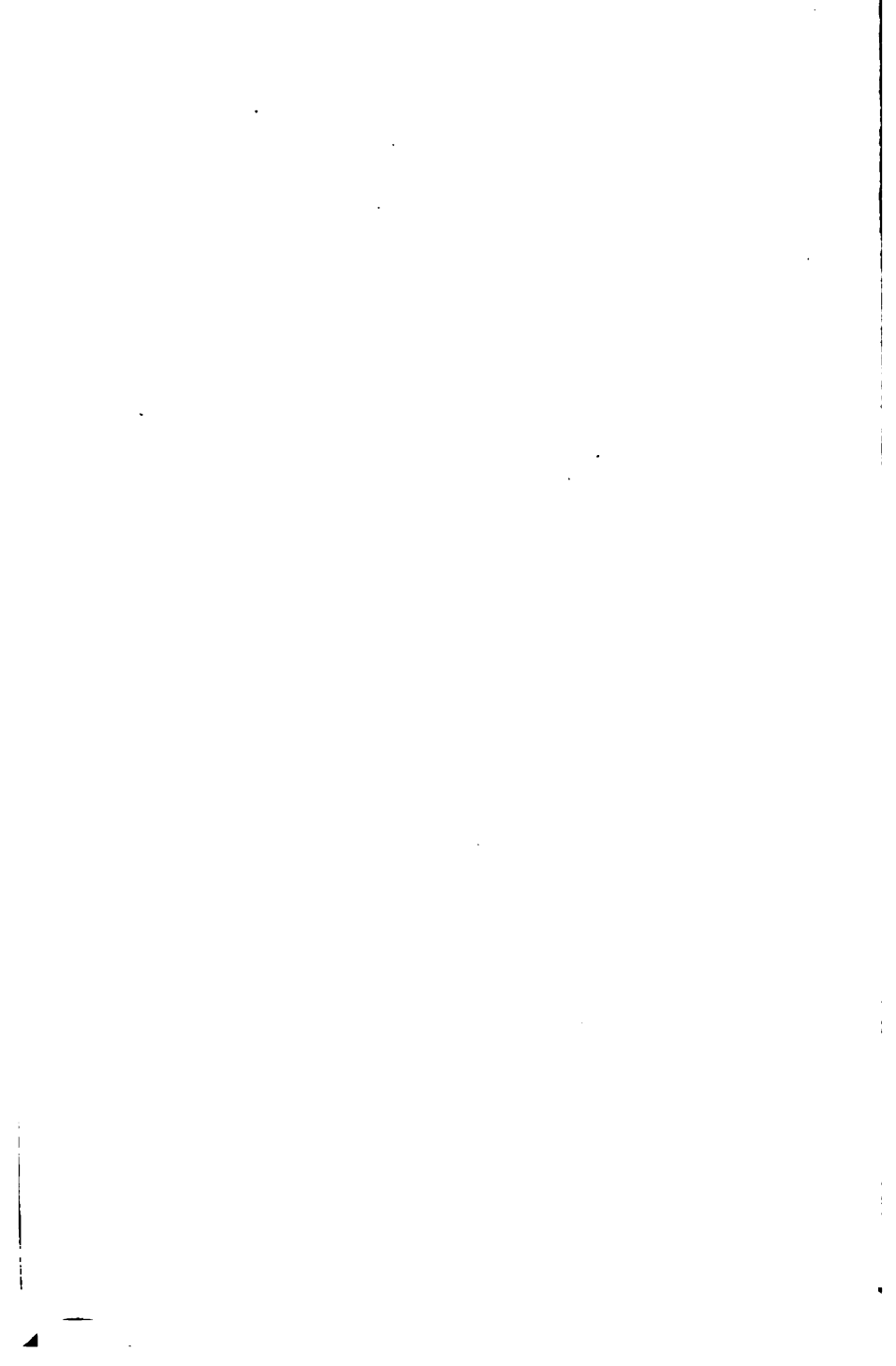
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THE BEQUEST OF
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THE MERELY AMIABLE, MORAL MAN, NO CHRISTIAN.

A DISCOURSE

BY ABIJAH WINES,
Minister of the Gospel.

PORTLAND:
Shirley & Hyde, Printers—Exchange-Street.
1828.

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FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
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DISCOURSE.

MARK X: 21.—*Then Jesus beholding him, loved him.*

There has long been a warm dispute whether man in his fallen state is wholly destitute of true religion. Some have advocated the affirmative, and many the negative of the question. The greatest objection, which has ever been urged against the doctrine of the entire moral depravity of man, before he undergoes a spiritual renovation, has been taken from certain agreeable principles, still remaining in human nature, such as sympathy, pity, parental and filial affections. Correct knowledge then of these principles is of high importance, as it has an immediate bearing upon our religious character, and the conditions of our salvation. The passage which has been read, naturally introduces this subject for examination. The person to whom the text refers was a young man and a ruler, probably a member of the Jewish Sanhedrim, the highest court then of their nation. He was strictly moral, and in outward deportment obedient to the laws of God ; as it appears from his own testimony and from the Saviour's treatment of him. When a few of the precepts of the moral law as a specimen of the whole were named, the young ruler replied, " all these have I kept from my youth up ; what lack I yet ? " Had he lived in open violation of the divine law, it can hardly be supposed he would have dared to make this broad assertion of perfect innocence before our Lord. Besides had he been immoral, and guilty of such falsehood in avowing his purity, our Saviour would have reprov'd him ; for Christ perfectly knew the characters of all men ; and when the guilty attempted to cover their iniquities and deceive him, he always detected

their hypocrisy, and administered faithful reproof. But on this occasion he did not even intimate that the young ruler was immoral or deceitful ; and his profound silence on this head fairly implies a virtual admittance of his innocence in external deportment. And not only was he moral, but he was amiable and serious. He came running, and kneeling before our Lord, affectionately addressing him ; “ good master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life ? ” Should we now behold an amiable moral youth, with such seriousness and solicitude for his future well-being, presenting himself in this humble attitude before a religious teacher, asking this most interesting of all questions, what must be done to obtain future eternal happiness, how should we view him ? Should we not look upon him and love him. We are informed that the Saviour of the world did look upon him and love him. Certainly he possessed lovely qualities or he never would have attracted the affection of Him who was actuated by a perfectly enlightened and correct taste.

Let us then examine attentively the amiable principles, which still remain in human nature, as depraved as it is. These principles, as already intimated, are good nature, kindness, sympathy, pity, sociability, parental, filial, and such like affections. An attempt to prove, that there is any such universal total depravity in our world as implies a destitution of these excellent qualities, would be utterly futile ; it would be an attempt at reasoning in direct opposition to stubborn facts. In what light then are we to view the amiable properties, which in a higher or lower degree, we behold in all or almost all men ? Are they *moral* or are they *natural* affections.

Man is composed of two constituent parts, spiritual and material, moral and natural. He is both a rational and moral being, and a physical animal being. He forms the links, in the chain of creatures between pure spirits and the highest order of animals. To which of his natures then, are we to ascribe the agreeable e-

motions under consideration ? Are we to ascribe them to his *moral* or to his *animal* existence ? Admitting the almost universal opinion to be correct, that beasts have no moral but merely animal nature, then, whatever is moral in man exclusively belongs to him,—he does not possess it in common with animals. Now it is a universally acknowledged fact, that animals possess good nature, kindness, sympathy, pity, parental, filial affections, and a kind of sociability. These agreeable qualities in animals to all appearance perfectly resemble the properties in men, which are expressed by the same terms. And does not the fact, that men and beasts possess these principles in common, prove them to be natural instincts ? Generally by philosophers as well as by divines the epithet *natural* has been applied to them, to distinguish them from moral principles. Lord Chesterfield calls them, when cultivated and refined, “ the *natural* *graces*.” But names are of little consequence. Some philosophers and divines are unwilling to consider these *graces* merely natural affections ; they class them among the moral emotions, and call them virtues ; but then they allow they are virtues of a lower order, than love to God for the perfection of his character, benevolent affection to men, and especially love to enemies. Now it is of trifling moment, what epithets are applied to the principles under review, whether they be called *moral* or *natural*, good, amiable, virtuous. The grand question is, *do they amount to true religion, conformity to the moral law of God—the temper which the gospel requires as essential to salvation ?* Do Lord Chesterfield’s *graces* qualify men for heaven ? Some, if not all, who plead, that these *graces* are moral virtues, still acknowledge them to be of a lower rank than the virtues of love to God, to man, to enemies, repentance, humility, submission, and such like *graces* of the Holy Spirit ; and they allow, that the former virtues are of so much lower grade than the latter, that those only cannot qualify men for heaven, and by which alone they cannot obtain eternal life. Why then should

we be strenuous advocates for that religion? why should we depend on those graces? which we may possess, and yet after all, if we attain no better temper, no higher character, we must be forever wretched.

To prove, that, what have been generally called the *natural* graces, ought to be elevated to the rank of *moral* virtues, though of somewhat lower order than holy love to God—to enemies, it has been argued that we *feel very differently* towards the man who possesses the lower graces, and the man who is destitute of them. You see a man, it has been said, from whose general conduct and conversation you have reason to believe, is no lover and worshipper of God, no sincere humble disciple of Jesus; yet he is moral and amiable, sympathetic, kind, and courteous—a dutiful child, a tender husband, and an affectionate parent. You behold another man, who is immoral, and almost destitute of all the amiable feelings of humanity; you view these two men in contrast, and you cannot help feeling differently towards them. You approve of the one and disapprove of the other; while you cannot but love the one, you cannot but hate the other. This is all very true; but what then? Does it hence follow that lower graces of the amiable man are moral virtues? that you esteem them with a moral approbation, that approbation which arises in view of love to God and man—love to enemies? No; this difference of feeling in view of the two men is no proof of any essential difference in their hearts and religious characters. You behold the innocent, harmless lamb, sporting among the herd; you also view the furious tiger seizing on his inoffensive prey; and let me ask, are you not conscious of different feelings towards these animals?—of emotions of approbation of the one and disapprobation of the other? of delight in the lamb, and disgust at the tiger? But every one knows, that this difference of feeling is no proof of *moral* difference in these animals. Neither is the difference of our feelings in view of the moral, amiable man, and of the

immoral, inhumane man a proof of strictly *moral* goodness in the one, more than in the other, or any essential *moral* difference in their hearts; their *moral* emotions, using the term *moral* in its primary and strict religious sense, may be substantially the same; though they widely differ in outward demeanor, and in many of the principles of human nature.

It may be further urged in proof of the moral virtue of what I choose to term the natural graces, that the man destitute of them is *more criminal* than he who possesses and cultivates them. In reply I observe, that though this argument be granted it will not prove the point for which it is intended, namely, the *moral* virtue of the natural graces.

The immoral, unkind man may be a greater sinner than the moral, compassionate, amiable man, still there may be no strictly moral goodness in either. Paul in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, where he is delineating the true character of the heathen world, to express their extreme guilt, says they are "without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." So long had they practiced gross unnatural immoralities, they had blunted and almost extirpated the tender emotions common to human beings. That there are many such monsters of vice in the present refined age, even in gospel lands, none will call in question. But what do these shocking instances prove? that every kind, well-bred man possesses some degree of moral goodness—some true scriptural religion—that religion which qualifies him for, and will finally bring him to heaven? No; as well might you argue the moral virtue of lambs and doves, from the ferocity of lions and eagles.

Should it be said, that as the amiable principles, still belonging to human nature in its fallen state, are in men who are rational beings, on this account they are to be considered of a different nature from similar emotions in animals, I reply, that belonging to rational, accountable agents does not necessarily render them

moral virtues. Hunger and thirst are precisely of the same nature in men as in animals.

It is farther argued in favor of the virtuous nature of the common, amiable properties of humanity, that they are *highly useful in society* and ought to be esteemed and cultivated. This I am far from being disposed to deny. Highly do I appreciate the natural good feelings, which still remain in human nature, as eminently useful in society, and when cultivated rendering it pleasant and happy. But never have I learnt, that *utility is virtue*. I am aware that Paul has forewarned us, that in the last days heretical instructors should arise, teaching that, "gain is Godliness."

Many properties belonging to human nature may be highly beneficial in the present life—substitutes for perfect holiness—designed for the good of society, and indeed without which our race could not exist on earth; which still do not amount to that Godliness which both the law and the gospel require; and therefore are not worth contending for as any kind of *moral* virtue.

I will now exhibit evidence that the feelings and graces, which are under review, are *not moral* virtues, do not form the *Godly man*—the *disciple of Jesus*, and do not *qualify men for heaven*.

1. I appeal to *conscience*, that faculty by which we judge of all moral feelings and actions. It is true, when we view the man of tender, delicate sensibilities, the man of good breeding and refinement, we cannot but esteem him; just so we cannot but venerate the man of native genius, cultivated by education; and here I maintain the emotion of approbation or esteem is similar. But it is altogether different from the approbation or esteem, which spontaneously and unavoidably arises in view of one who loves his Maker supremely, and every fellow creature, even his bitterest enemies, as himself. Here is an emotion, a strict moral approbation, widely diverse from an emotion, arising in view of any temper, not implying this universal, disinterested, holy

love. I appeal to every man's conscience. Let him make the trial—let him view this God-like love in all its branches, and also the natural feelings and graces so highly esteemed by men of education and refinement; and then let him carefully examine the emotions of conscience, and he will instantly perceive as great a difference of feelings towards the two objects in view, as in his veneration of genius and moral approbation of holiness. Let him, for instance, view the Redeemer of the world, on the cross offering up to his Father that inimitable prayer for his cruel murderers, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" and then let him look to the merely moral, amiable polite man; and let him honestly say, whether he is not intuitively sensible of as great difference in his approbation of the two characters as between light and darkness.

2. The affections under consideration do not amount to conformity to the *moral law of God*. It is to be feared that, those who plead for the moral goodness of such qualities of human nature compare them with incorrect fallible standards of moral goodness, such as the rules of politeness, the fashionable customs of society, and the opinions of erring men. But to the law and to the testimony of God I appeal. By this infallible standard we must try every disposition and action, if we would form a correct judgment of its moral nature. The moral law, the only measure of moral right and wrong, requires holiness, and nothing but holiness, supreme love to God, and love to our neighbors as to ourselves, and the genuine fruits of this impartial benevolence. Our Saviour has put the question to rest. When he was asked which is the first and great commandment in the law, he replied, "thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." But manifestly there is no holiness,

none of this universal love, which in our Saviour's view is the sum total of what God requires of men, in the humane affections, under examination. Those who have almost extirpated these tender emotions are indeed desperately wicked, not merely because they are destitute of them, but because they have so long indulged selfishness, and committed such grossa vices, that they have eradicated from their bosoms all the amiable feelings. The want of these kind emotions, and a moral character, is a sure proof of extreme wickedness; but the possession of them is no proof of moral goodness, holiness, conformity to the moral law.

3. The natural amiable passions and graces are often found in those who evidently have no true benevolent love to God, to their fellow creatures, especially none to their enemies. The young ruler was moral in his demeanor, and amiable in his natural dispositions; and yet obviously he had no true love for God and Jesus. His heart was fastened to the world; it was his idol. Christ told him that he lacked one thing; and what was this one thing wanting? manifestly it was a heart to love God and the enjoyment of him supremely, that is to say, more than all earthly good. This our Saviour knew, for he had a perfect knowledge of his heart; therefore he directed him to sell all: that he possessed and distribute it to the poor. And had this agreeable youth loved God and Jesus supremely, and his fellow servants as himself, would he not have cheerfully obeyed this reasonable command? especially when, if he did obey, he was sure, by the Saviour's promise, of a treasure in heaven? The young ruler was brought to just this dilemma, to give up the world as his god, his chief good, or a treasure in heaven; he could not possibly enjoy both as his supreme portion; he must renounce his idol or he must perish forever. Now in such a trying alternative, had he loved his God and his Saviour, and a

treasure in heaven, more than the world, would he not have obeyed Jesus' command? What but want of this love could possibly have prevented his obedience, when on the one hand eternal felicity, and on the other hand endless misery were depending? The strongest and most permanent affection will always govern the man. This is a fundamental invariable law of mind. If then this young man had loved God and Jesus more than the world, this strongest passion would have governed him in the case before us, and prompted him to obedience to the Saviour's command. But he did not obey, but as we are informed, "went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." His own conduct then, his disobedience to Christ's just command, proved him to be destitute of supreme love to his Creator and Redeemer. And if he did not love God supremely he did not love him at all, that is, with the least degree of right affection; for God is supremely great, and excellent, and glorious; and he will have the highest or no seat in our affections. Jesus himself has fully decided this point. "No man can serve two masters; for either he will love the one, and hate the other; or else he will cleave to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." John decides the same point. "If any man love the world," that is to say, supremely, more than he does God; "if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." The conversation which Christ had with his disciples immediately after the young man had departed sorrowful, affords conclusive proof that love of the world governed his heart and life, and that therefore the love of the Father was not in him. "Jesus looked round about and said unto his disciples, how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?" The disciples were astonished, and it should seem mistook his meaning, supposing him to say, it is impossible for those, who have much of the world in possession, to be saved. Christ explained himself, "Children, how hard is it for those that *trust* in riches

to enter into the kingdom of heaven?" Our Saviour obviously intended to apply the character to this ruler of one who *trusts* in wealth as his god or supreme portion. Thus the sacred history of the rich young man brings us to this result, that his heart was supremely placed upon an earthly treasure, as his chief good, and that therefore God and a heavenly inheritance had no place in his affections. A heart to love God and heavenly objects was the one thing which he lacked. And, as he had no true love for his Maker, so he was destitute of benevolent affection towards his fellow creatures. For had he loved his neighbors, even his enemies as himself, he would have loved his Creator supremely; for love to God and man is evidently the same affection in nature. The same holy temper which induces a man to delight in the happiness of his fellow beings will induce him also to delight supremely in God. Love to God and man can never exist separately, but always conjointly. This truth is explicitly stated by the apostle John. "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?—He who loveth God loveth his brother also.

But though the rich young ruler was entirely destitute of holy love to God and man, and every grace of the gospel, yet he was exemplary in his behavior, and amiable in his natural dispositions. But his humane tender feelings, call them by what specious name you please, were obviously not of the nature of holy love to God, or man, or heavenly sources of delight; for if they had partaken of the nature of this holy affection, they would have led him to love God and obey Christ's command. And the case of this young man is not a solitary instance. There always have existed a multitude of such characters. Thousands in the present age possess the common social, kind feelings of humanity; and yet they show by their conduct, that they are not lovers and worshippers of God, and the sincere humble disciples of

the meek and lowly Jesus. In the language of inspiration they are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. Many of these amiable persons cast off the filial fear of the Almighty and restrain prayer, living in open violation of known divine commands, so far as they can, and yet maintain a decent, fair character among men. They lie under the heavy charge, which the high court of heaven has brought against our race, that, "they love and serve the creature more than God the Creator." It is obvious therefore that none of their affections, however amiable and useful in society, are of the nature of moral virtue or holiness, the essential qualification for heaven.

4. These social tender affections exist, and are cultivated in not a few, *who live in the practice of gross vices*. Herod was one of the vilest of characters, yet he was not a stranger to tender sensibilities and affections for his family and friends. For a time he indulged a kind regard for John the Baptist; "he observed him, and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him *gladly*." But when his darling lust was counteracted, his tender affections did not restrain him from sacrificing to his criminal indulgence, the life of his affectionate and faithful reprov-
er.

Who will pretend that the Jewish rulers and the Roman Pilot, who condemned and put to death our perfectly innocent Saviour, were destitute of the compassionate emotions of human nature and the graces of politeness? of parental and filial affections? Still who will dare to plead for the virtue, the holiness of the murderers of the Lord of life and glory?

But we need not look to ancient periods for characters in whom meet the amiable qualities of human nature the principles of a refined education, and the habitual commission of some sins, which are forbidden by the law of God under the tremendous sanction of eternal death. Far be it from me to bring so heavy a charge against all or against the majority of moral, amiable people of refined manners. I hope and believe, that compara-

tively but few of this class of society live in any gross habits of iniquity. But I fear not contradiction, when I state that there are some, even in the present boasted age of light and refinement, who excel in delicate sensibilities and the polite graces; and yet who allow themselves to be guilty of certain vices of such magnitude in God's sight, that he has placed the prohibition of them in the decalogue under the penalty of endless punishment. Indeed the amiable sensibilities of our nature, especially when highly refined and polished, lay us open to powerful temptations to the vices alluded to, where there are no restraints from the principle of holiness, and the filial fear of offending the Almighty. For the proof of this position, were proof necessary, I might refer you to a host of characters at the close of the last and at the commencement of the present century—not among the lower, but the higher and refined class of society—not in a nation of ignorance and barbarism; but in a nation who stand preeminent for education, for improvements in the fine arts—a nation, who for sociability, delicacy of feeling, and many other amiable accomplishments, are placed at the head of the catalogue of civilized nations. Still when the restraints of religion and human laws were removed, the first characters among them committed such abominable crimes, under the pretence too of innocence, that even the remembrance of them is sufficient to draw tears of compassion from the eyes of humanity, and to crimson the cheeks of modesty.

But would men of social feelings and refined manners be habitually guilty of atrocious vices, if those accomplishments partook of the nature of virtue, love to God and man? No; it would be impossible. That temper which is of the nature of love and filial fear of God will restrain men from habitual vices.

What says John on this interesting subject? "Let no man deceive you—he that commiteth sin [habitually] is of the devil—whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed re-

maineth in him ; and he cannot sin [habitually] because he is born of God."

5. The amiable principles of our nature, which we are considering, do not amount to the *temper required in the gospel as essential to salvation*. Granting them to be virtuous, using the term in a lax secondary sense, the most interesting question, which deeply concerns us all to solve, is, do these principles partake of the *nature of gospel grace* ? Are they a compliance with the indispensable conditions of salvation ? Do they qualify men for heaven ? If not, the dispute about their virtuous nature is of trifling consequence.

The gospel requires supreme love to God, and love to our neighbors as to ourselves, even to our enemies, repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, purity of heart, submission, patience, poverty of spirit, humility, meekness, hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Such graces, such moral feelings, none will deny are every where enjoined in the gospel. True, those who possess and cultivate these graces of the holy Spirit, inherit and cherish the principles of sympathy, parental, filial, and the other kind affections, common to our nature ; so that those who seem to be almost destitute of these emotions, as Paul represents the heathen to be, have no just claim to the Christian character, these emotions in their nature, being totally different from gospel graces. These graces will guard men against sin, and prompt them to universal obedience to the divine commands. But the natural affections do not necessarily produce such effects ; they exist in thousands of instances where there is no such happy result. Such amiable accomplishments are often the occasions of preventing men from depending on Jesus, the only name revealed from heaven by which we can be saved ! and of trusting to their own imaginary self-righteousness as the ground of acceptance with God ; as was the case with the young ruler, with Saul of Tarsus, and many other pharisees.

Love to God, to enemies, faith in Jesus, the gospel temper of

poverty of spirit, humility, meekness, weanedness from the world, heavenly-mindedness—will lead persons to take up the cross, deny themselves, and follow Jesus through good report and evil report, trusting in him for salvation. But the common afflictions of humanity never have such influence upon us ; they never induce us to renounce all confidence in the flesh, to use the apostle's language—all dependence on our own righteousness, and to rely on the mediation and atonement of Christ for pardon and salvation ; they never prompt us to forsake the world as our chief good, and place our best treasure in heaven.

As the gospel demands of us love to God, to man, to enemies ; repentance, faith in Jesus, humility, meekness, self-denial, purity of heart ; so it requires this holy temper, *as absolutely necessary to salvation*. Impossible is it for any one attentively to examine the gospel, and not be deeply convicted of this most serious truth. After a pious, devout heathen had read the New Testament for the first time, laying it down and meditating on what he had read, one of the first thoughts which would strike his mind, would be this, that the extraordinary book he had read, required holiness of heart and life, and dependence on Christ, as indispensable to salvation—that it plainly taught, that without a holy heart and life—without that faith in Jesus, which works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world, no one of our race can be saved. No truth is more plainly and abundantly inculcated in the gospel than this ; and no truth can possibly be more clearly and explicitly taught by human language. The whole tenor of the gospel on this momentous subject, is, “ he that believeth shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”—“ Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish.”—“ He that forsaketh not all that he hath, cannot be my disciple.”—“ Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.” Who will now substitute the common tender feelings and polite graces of human nature, for the holy temper of the gospel ?—for these essen-

tial prerequisites to salvation? No man in his senses, who believes the Bible to be the word of God, can do this.

6: When our Lord was asked the question, "are there few that be saved?" his reply was; "strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able—for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." None will deny, that our Saviour's serious observations here applied to the generation of the Jews then upon the stage of life; and that they plainly imply, that but comparatively few of that generation were truly righteous, walking in the strait and narrow way that leads to eternal life. But were indeed the great majority of that nation destitute of the common feelings of humanity? Were none, except the few who were travelling in the narrow way, possessed of sympathy, parental, filial, and such like affections? And are not our Lord's alarming statements too applicable to the people of our own age and nation? Will charity allow us to believe that *all*, or even a *majority*, are walking in the strait and narrow path?—that all or most are striving, mourning for sin, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, watching and praying, to enter in at the strait gate?—working out their salvation with fear and trembling? Alas! How many are living in open vice, intemperance, profanity, slander, falsehood, profanation of the Sabbath! And how many more are casting off the fear of God, and restraining prayer, neglecting secret, family, and public devotion, living in open violation of the known commands of the great Redeemer! But shall we conclude, that all who are walking in the broad way, are destitute of the social affections of our nature? or shall we say, that all who are possessed of them are sincere disciples of Jesus, and travelling in the narrow road to life? Or shall we say, that there are many, who, as they possess kind affections, are virtuous and holy, and yet are walking in the broad

road to destruction ? The least degree of moral virtue, holiness, purity of heart, repentance, evangelical faith, constitutes a disciple of Jesus, a traveller in the road to heaven. If not, tell me, *how* virtuous, *how* holy, *how* pure in heart, he must be to be a disciple and an heir of glory ? If you deny, that the smallest degree of holiness, repentance, faith, is the essential characteristic of a disciple of Jesus—a traveller in the road to heaven, you can never tell what degree of virtue and holiness is necessary to constitute a disciple and traveller to heaven ; because the Bible draws no line of distinction between degrees of holiness, between some holy men, who are, and some holy men who are not, Christians—pilgrims to heaven. Or will any be so adventurous, when Jesus himself has stated the road to life to be strait and narrow, and few travellers in it ; and the way to destruction to be broad and thronged with passengers—so adventurous as to reverse the statement, and make the way of virtue to life so wide as to include all men of good breeding and decent behavior, even all possessed of the common feelings of humanity ; and the road of vice to destruction so strait and narrow as to exclude only the few who are “ without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful ? ”

All who are pursuing the broad way to ruin are wholly destitute of holiness, or some are rushing on in this way who are virtuous and holy. But none are travelling this fatal road who are virtuous and holy in the least degree ; yet many are, who are kind and courteous, affable, polite, and outwardly moral. It is he and he only who is penitent, meek, humble, pure in heart, poor in spirit—it is he and he only who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, who forsakes all and denies himself for Christ's sake—it is he and he only who is working out his salvation with fear and trembling, who is the disciple of Jesus and heir of glory.

REMARKS.

1. In view of the leading sentiment of this discourse, we see distinctly the whole amount of the doctrine of total depravity. It does not imply destitution of rational active powers of moral agents, or of humane natural affections. It does not imply, that men, before they become disciples of Jesus, perform no external actions but such as the law of God forbids—none but vicious actions. It allows that they possess all those rational active powers, which are necessary to moral agency, and to the performance of duty. It allows that they possess many amiable affections, and that they may and do perform many external actions required in the law of God—affections and actions highly useful in society. The doctrine is precisely this, that men, before they experience a moral renovation, before they become the sincere, the meek, the humble followers of Jesus, are *wholly destitute of his holy spirit*—destitute of the temper of the gospel, of holiness, love to God, to man, to enemies—destitute of that faith in Christ, which “works by love”—destitute of that temper of heart, which, according to the tenor of the gospel, is an indispensable qualification for heavenly felicity. Wherever there is this destitution in any human heart, there reigns predominant the contrary spirit, selfishness, supreme love of the world—a disposition to make the gratification of his appetites and desires his ultimate supreme good. This is the sum total of what is intended by total moral depravity. And unless you suppose all men are the sincere disciples of Christ, exercise holy love to God, to man, to enemies—repentance and faith in Christ, and thus are qualified for heaven, and will finally be saved, you must believe this doctrine. If you allow, that some men do not feel the spirit of the gospel, what Paul calls, “the power of godliness,” are not true christians, nor prepared for heaven—that their hearts are not placed upon a heavenly treasure, but upon some earthly good; then you must

allow the doctrine in fact to be true ; for this is the import, and the only import of the doctrine.

The young ruler, with all his amiable qualities and spotless morality, was of this character. He loved the world supremely, and therefore did not love God or man with the least degree of benevolent holy affection. With this temper and character, he was not a disciple of Jesus, nor qualified for endless happiness. Christ promised him, that if he would sell all he had and distribute it to the poor, take up the cross and follow him—if he would but let go of the world in his affections as his only good, and place his supreme love upon God, he should have a treasure in heaven. The tenor of this promise fairly implies, that the young, amiable, moral man, could not be saved, but must finally perish, if he did not comply with the Saviour's directions. He did not comply, but "went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." Jesus immediately said to his disciples, "verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven—it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." This rich man then was totally destitute of the heavenly temper, with his present character he could not be saved; and thus he was the subject of total moral depravity.

And utterly vain is it for any to attempt to exclude themselves from this class of men by the plea, that they possess but little of this world. For it alters not the temper and character, whether you inherit more or less of this world—whether wealth, or honor, or pleasure, be the supreme object of your affection and pursuit. Though you be wholly destitute of riches, honors and pleasures, still if you ardently desire all or either of them as your supreme good—if you love and serve the creature instead of God the Creator, you come under our Lord's description of the man who *trusts* in the world, and who cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven—you are not the sincere disciples of Jesus, nor qualified

for the enjoyments and employments of the world above. You are morally and totally depraved ; and without a radical change in your moral feelings, you can never join the pure society in glory. Said Jesus to the unbelieving, worldly minded Jews, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you—whither I go ye cannot come."

2. This subject shows us, what is to be understood by the scriptural doctrine of the *new birth or regeneration*. Perhaps this serious important doctrine above all others, by writers and preachers, has been shrouded in darkness and mystecism. While some have lowered it down, so as to mean nothing more than water baptism, or a change of speculative belief from Jewdaism and Paganism to Christianity, or at most an outward reformation, others again have attempted to raise it into the unknown regions of theory, immagination, and metaphsics, representing it to be some miraculous light, voice, or vision from heaven ; or some strange unaccountable impression or change, produced on the human mind by the immediate irresistable operation of almighty power, without any truths and motives presented to the understanding, in which change the man is altogether inactive and passive. Such a phisical change in the constitution of mind is utterly inconsistent with free agency, with sin and blame for not being, and with virtue and praise for being, a new born man. But not to enlarge on the many wild and absurd theories of regeneration, invented by men ; I humbly conceive the doctrine as stated and explained in the sacred oracles is intelligible and easy to be understood by the lowest capacity. If men naturally, or before they become the disciples of Christ, with all their possible amiableness of dispositions and external morality, are destitute of the holy spirit of the gospel—if they love and serve the creature instead of God the Creator, then it is a perfectly plain case, a case that may be easily understood by every one of common sense, that there must be a change in their moral affections

to make them Christians and to qualify them for the holy society above. This is as intelligible and as absolute a necessity, as the necessity of a change in our nature in order to experience pleasurable emotions from beautiful and sublime objects, supposing we had now no natural taste for beauty and sublimity. And as to the *general manner* in which this change is produced, I humbly conceive there is no more difficulty or mystery attending it, than what attends every change of our affections, exercises and actions. Let me give you my views of this most serious subject. The man who finds himself destitute of the temper of the gospel, of love to God and to Jesus, and thus unqualified for heaven, and exposed to future punishment, begins to think seriously of himself and his condition in relation to the invisible world. He reviews his life, examines the law of God, is convinced, that he is a transgressor of this law, and condemned by it to unutterable sufferings. It is with him as it was with Paul, when he said "I was alive once without the law, but the commandment came, sin revived and I died." After reviewing his life, he looks into his heart to ascertain how the case stands there with his Maker—to see if he can find the gospel temper, which is required as absolutely necessary to salvation; but he looks in vain. He perceives in his heart no holy love to God, to Christ, to men, to enemies—no evangelical repentance, faith, or any Christian grace. On searching deep into his heart, he sees and feels the truth of the Apostle's assertions, "in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."—"The carnal mind is enmity against God, is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."—"By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Viewing himself a transgressor of the divine law, and all exposed to the execution of its penalty, he feels alarmed and anxious, as well he may, for his salvation. While he is thus meditating on the law and character of

God, on himself a transgressor, the evil of sin, the danger of it, the reasonableness of the temper and course of life required in the gospel, the happy result of such a temper and life, the character of Christ and the method of redemption through his meditation—with some of these subjects and motives in view, he feels springing up in his bosom the benevolent temper of the gospel ; he loves the divine character and delights in it ; he loves the perfectly amiable character of Jesus ; and while he acquiesces in the law of God as holy, just and good, he trusts in the merits of the Redeemer for pardon and salvation ; he feels now a love to his enemies, which he never felt before ; and thus he has become, in the language of inspiration, morally a new creature. With the Psalmist he can now say, “ I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste, and delayed not, to keep thy commandments.” And I ask, what is there in all this, mysterious, unaccountable, or irrational ? What, that should move the tongue of satire ? I *envy* not—I *pity* the man, who makes this moral, glorious renovation, the topic of profane ridicule. I fear he is a total stranger to the heavenly temper. Here is no physical change—no passiveness in the human mind—no immediate irresistible power breaking in upon created agency, and producing a renovation without moral suasion, motives, considerations, on physical principles. Still, who will dare to deny, that the man in this rational, moral change, as at all other periods, was entirely dependent upon God—that it was in God that he then, as ever before, “ lived and moved, and had his being ?” Who will be so adventurous as to deny, that from the Father of lights, came down to this man, every good and spiritual gift ?” God in this moral renovation brings back his wandering offspring to himself, to virtue and happiness, on precisely the same principles on which he governs all his rational creatures, and all their actions ; not on physical, but moral principles, moral laws, commands and prohibitions, promises and threatenings,

arguments and motives. I will now refer you to only one passage of scripture, which in my view, fully explains what our Lord intended by being "*born again*." The passage to which I refer, is in the first epistle of John, who uses the same metaphor, and who doubtless well knew what our Saviour meant to express by it. "Let us love one another; for love is of God, and every one that *loveth is born of God*, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love." If any man be destitute of holy love to God, to man, to enemies; according to this passage, as soon as he begins to exercise this holy affection, this god-like spirit, he is born of God. No explanation of the new birth can be plainer or more rational than this. The change consists essentially in the commencement of holy love in that heart, where before existed none of this heavenly temper. Heaven we all know, is a region of pure holy love; *this* is it which constitutes the very essence of heaven; no other spirit can qualify us for that blessed world. No wonder then that Jesus positively and seriously declares, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

3. If there be no holiness in the common compassionate affections of human nature, then no cultivation of these principles will amount to regeneration, or gospel qualification for heaven. Let the appetites of hunger and thirst, or natural taste for beauty and sublimity be ever so well cultivated and refined, they will remain precisely of the same nature as before cultivation, merely natural propensities. Thus also, let any other principles of human nature, which fall short of holiness, be regulated and raised to the summit of perfection, they will not amount to the spirit of the gospel—they will not make us holy, the meek and humble followers of Jesus—they will not prepare us for the business and joys of heaven. If the social affections, as has been shown, do not partake of the nature of holiness, in a rude state, neither will they be of the nature of this temper,

though they be ever so highly improved and refined. All that such culture and refinement can do, is, to make men externally moral, useful, and agreeable members of society in the present imperfect state. To fit them for the pure society above, new affections must be added; they must love supremely their Maker and Saviour, and a treasure in heaven, to become members of that perfect community. Supreme love of the world may reign in the heart of the most moral, polite, and amiable man, without one spark of the heavenly flame of love to God and the Redeemer. Of such a character were the young ruler, and many of the scribes and pharisees, who were compared by our Lord to whited sepulchres, which appear beautiful in the eyes of men, but within are full of impurity. And of such a character are multitudes in the present enlightened refined age. That those, who possess no higher attainments than these, cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, the Saviour of the world has decided.

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me; and he that taketh not his cross, and followeth not after me, is not worthy of me."—"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

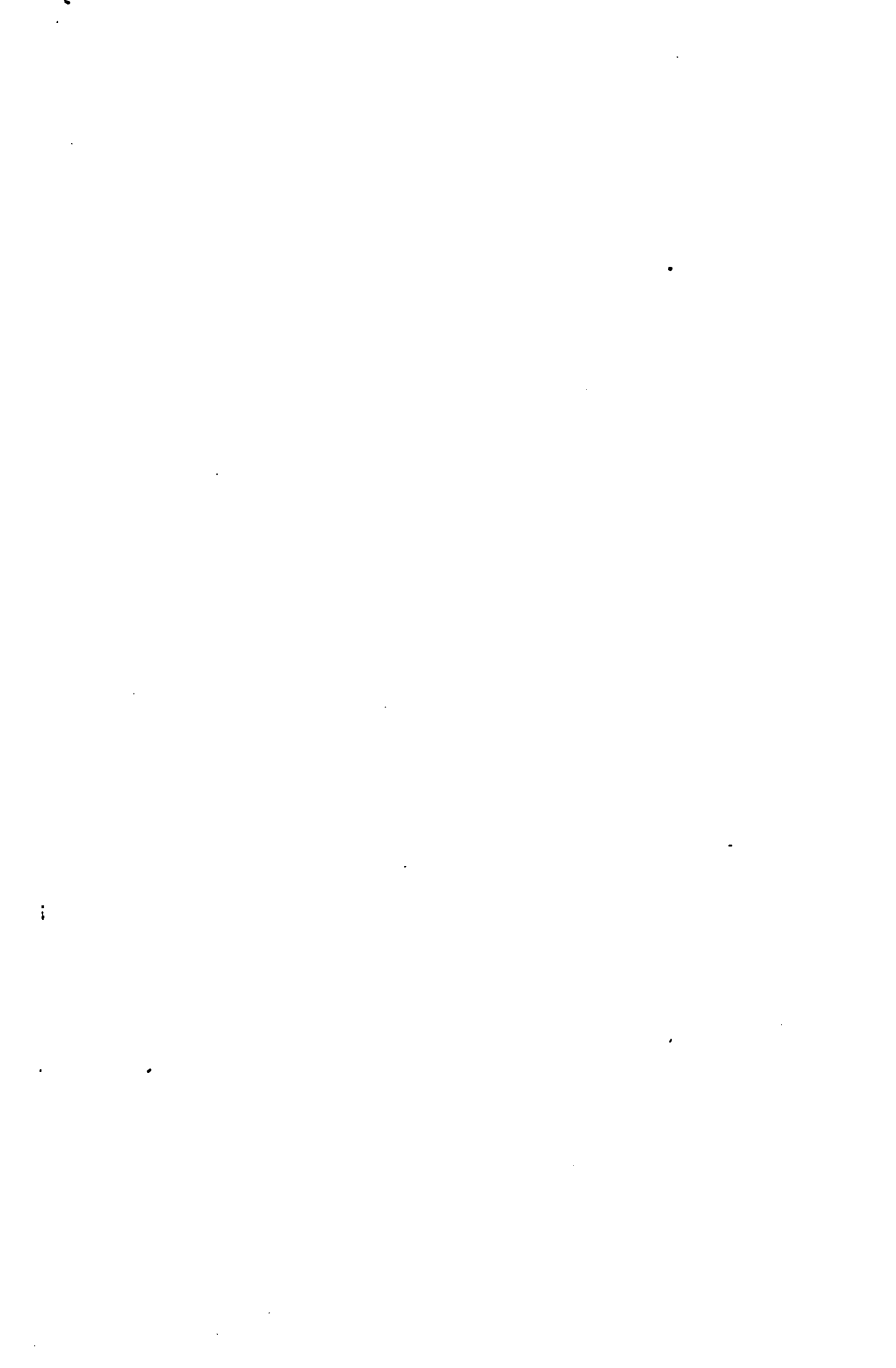
Men are in imminent danger of mistaking outward morality and the tender emotions of our nature for true religion. Many ~~souls~~, I fear, are shipwrecked on this fatal rock, Christ has forewarned us, that many will say to him in the last day, "thou hast taught in our streets; we have eaten and drunken in thy presence; in thy name we have cast out devils; and in thy name we have done many wonderful works." But Christ will say to them, "I know you not, depart from me, ye workers of iniquity." Paul has solemnly cautioned against the same delusion. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [love,] it profiteth me nothing."

We do not blame you for a punctual discharge of the duties of morality.* Utterly vain are all pretensions to the Christian character, without a steady, conscientious performance of these duties. We do not blame you for cultivating the natural graces. But we do affectionately and solemnly warn you, not to depend on any of these accomplishments for salvation—to rely on nothing short of that faith in Jesus, which works by love, and entitles to pardon and the favor of God. Remember what the Apostle has said; “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus-Christ. Now if any man build on this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble—every man’s work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it; because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.”

Finally, if those who have attained no higher character than that which is formed by the assemblage of social affections, the graces of a polite education, and of a spotless external morality—if such have no claim to discipleship of Jesus and the kingdom of heaven, ah! what shall be said of the vicious, the intemperate, the profane—those who have almost eradicated from their bosoms the tender sensibilities of human nature! If the amiable moral man, without holiness cannot be saved, what will be the doom of bold transgressors? “If the righteous scarcely be saved, “where, O where,” shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”

* On reading this discourse should any one imagine, that the general tendency of it is to disparage good works, he would greatly mistake the leading design. To encourage and promote good works, the broad gospel foundation of such works must first be laid. Would you cleanse the impure streams, where would you direct your principal efforts? To the polluted fountain, undoubtedly. Could you succeed in persuading men to possess the holy temper of the gospel, they would unavoidably cultivate the amiable natural feelings, and conscientiously discharge all the duties of morality. “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good.” The grand scriptural design of the moral renovation, intended by the new birth, is, to promote virtuous practice. “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” The best, the only effectual way to the performance of good works—to reduce the gospel to practice, is, in the first place, to purify the heart. Says the Psalmist: “I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart.” The Scribes and Pharisees as classes of people were outwardly and strictly moral and religious. But what said the Saviour to them? “Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside may be clean also.”







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